

Biblical Basis for Reentry Ministry



This resource provides the biblical foundation to guide you in the development of a reentry ministry in your church and community. We pray that the Lord will use His living and active Word to build your vision for this important ministry.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8)

Principle 1: All things are redeemable through Christ.

Crime is fundamentally a moral problem. It is the result of man's rebellion against God. It is secondarily a socioeconomic problem. The solution is in the person of Jesus Christ. It begins with repentance and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is accomplished through His power to sanctify and transform individuals and the community.

Reentry ministry needs to include a presentation of the Gospel and emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life. There should be an appropriate balance in attention to spiritual/relational problems and socioeconomic problems.

No one is ever beyond redemption. We don't give up on people even when it seems they will never change. Instead we pursue and continue to encourage those God brings to us.

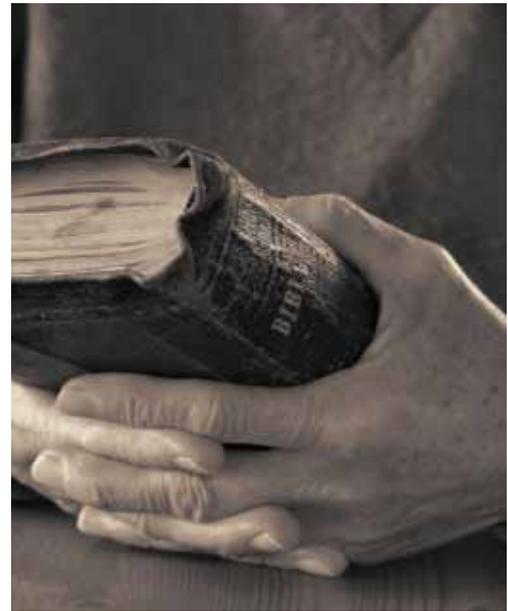
- **Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- **Galatians 5:16-23** So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
- **Galatians 6:9-10** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people...

Principle 2: Through our relationship in Christ, all can experience growth, healing, and restoration.

Healing takes place in the context of community as we relate to each other within the body of believers. Therefore, we seek to engage the whole Christian community in reentry ministry, not just isolated individuals.

Information alone does not transform a life. Love and teaching expressed through the Body of Christ, in its diversity and with all its gifts, produces maturity in Christ. When we plan our reentry ministries, time for relationship building needs to be intentionally allotted.

- **John 17:21-23** That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
- **1 John 4:7-8** Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.
- **Ephesians 2:19-22** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.
- **Ephesians 4:11-13** It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



Principle 3: The Body of Christ is called to minister to those who have been imprisoned or oppressed.

Unlike any other organization or ministry, the Church has been ordained to be God's instrument of grace and ministry in this world. The act of serving prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families in the name of Jesus is both a ministry and a means of worship and spiritual growth.

- **Luke 4:16-19** ...on the Sabbath day he [Jesus] went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
- **Matthew 25:40-43** The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."
- **Hebrews 13:3** Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

- **Matthew 9:35-38** Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”
- **John 21:16-17** Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”
- **1 John 3:16-18** This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Principle 4: Through God’s power, those who are enslaved by sin can be set free.

Reentry ministry serves the community by helping ex-prisoners avoid going back to their criminal lifestyles and returning to prison. The message of the Church is that there is no temptation that cannot be overcome by God’s grace. Jesus freely offers forgiveness of sin and deliverance from evil.

- **Acts 2:38-39** Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”
- **1 Peter 5:8-9** Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
- **Romans 12:1-2** Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- **James 4:7-8** Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- **Romans 8:1-3** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh.

Principle 5: By our faith, we bring glory to God on earth and communities are transformed.

Reentry ministry is a powerful testimony to the world of the transforming power of the love of Christ. The community as a whole experiences transformation as the Church reaches out to all those impacted by crime and demonstrates the mercy and grace of Jesus.

- **Matthew 5:13-16** You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under-

foot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

- **Ephesians 4:14-16** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
- **Ephesians 4:22-24** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
- **John 17:21-23** That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
- **Isaiah 32:18** My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

